



TO: Workforce Development Board Directors
WorkOne Operators
Youth Coordinators

FROM: Regina Ashley, Associate Chief Operations Officer for Policy
Indiana Department of Workforce Development

DATE: December 17, 2015

SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM
Interim Guidance on WIOA Title I Youth Program Elements

REA

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to local Workforce Development Boards, their operators, and their service providers regarding the definition and requirements of the provision of youth program elements and services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

References

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 129
Proposed Regulations §§681.460, §§681.470

Background

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act renewed and realigned many of the youth program elements provided under the Workforce Investment Act. An additional five (5) new elements were created to meet the needs of today's ever changing workforce system and the much needed essential skills our youth participants must possess in order to attain and retain meaningful employment and educational opportunities.

Content

The purpose of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act youth services is to assist young people, (ages 14-21 if in-school youth; ages 16-24 if out-of-school youth), who face significant barriers to education and/or employment by providing resources and support to overcome those barriers and successfully transition to self-sufficiency. This is accomplished by assessing a participant's skills, interests, needs, and goals; creating customized service plans in collaboration with the participant; and expanding the participant's connection to the local economy, educational opportunities, and community services.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires that local workforce development areas must "make available" all of the required fourteen (14) program elements to youth participants. Not all services must be

funded with WIOA youth funds and local programs are encouraged to leverage partner resources to provide program elements that are available in their local area. However, if a local program does not fund an activity with WIOA Title I youth funds, the local area must have an agreement in place with the partner to offer the program element and ensure that the activity is closely connected and coordinated with the WIOA youth program for enrolled participants.

Determination of which program elements are provided to the youth participant must be made upon review of the youth's eligibility, barriers, needs, and goals through the use of an objective assessment. The program elements that will be utilized to address the participant's barriers must be documented in the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) or Academic Career Plan (ACP); the ISS or ACP should be updated as additional barriers or needs arise.

The 14 youth program elements and their definitions are:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies.

These activities must assist the youth in acquiring the academic knowledge and skills needed to succeed in specific areas, improve youth's ability to learn by giving them the skills to learn effectively and competently on their own, and keep youth in school until graduation from high school. All activities should lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

2. Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services as appropriate.

Alternative schools offer a variety of specialized curriculum options that are tailored to meet the youth's needs to increase the chances of graduation. In Indiana, the alternative education programs and models designed to meet the needs of disaffected youth are very diverse, allowing the opportunity to reach a wide variety of students. Qualifying alternative secondary school services include, but are not limited to: alternative classrooms, school within-a-school programming, separate alternative schools, and second or last-chance schools.

Dropout recovery services are those that would help a youth participant achieve their High School Diploma or its equivalent and may include the Jobs for America's Graduates program model or others that will provide employability skills, counseling, and support as the participant completes goals related to their education plan.

3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, including summer employment and other opportunities throughout the year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities.

Work experiences are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time. Paid and unpaid work experiences provide youth invaluable experiences in the workforce and allow youth to develop basic necessary work skills and good work habits needed to be successful, while including academic and occupational education components as well. They also give youth the opportunity to acquire knowledge of the requirements and practices of the working world via experiences. Such experiences may include but are not limited to: summer employment opportunities and other opportunities throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities. Work experiences must be based on identified needs of the individual youth but do not have to be directly correlated with the youth's individual career or employment goals. The primary purpose of paid and unpaid work experience is to expose youth to the workforce, allow them to gain insight into career fields and employment opportunities, and give them experience with work readiness skills.

All work experiences must include some form of academic or occupational learning as a component of the program element. This could include certifications earned in a pre-apprenticeship program; employability skills and employer expectations that would make a participant successful on the job; or specific skills or knowledge needed to perform daily duties and tasks of a specific career.

4. Occupational skills training.

Occupational skills training consists of a planned program of study that provides specific vocational skills training that leads to the ability to efficiently perform tasks and technical functions vital to certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels.

Occupational skills training activities may include: job-specific competency training, on-site industry specific training, institutional skills training, customized training for specific employer(s) with the commitment to hire upon successful program completion, entrepreneurial training, internships, and pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training.

5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities.

Education that is concurrent with workforce preparation is meant to emphasize the need for continuous efforts to educate youth and grow their skill sets – especially those participating in the workforce and those preparing to enter it. This element's essential goals include but are not limited to: integrating education with workforce preparation initiatives, activities, and priorities; providing real-world context and applications to skills learned in the classroom; occupational skills training that prepares youth to enter the workforce via specific occupations, occupational clusters, or career pathways; and ongoing educational programs that enable youth at work to continue developing multi-faceted workplace skill sets for the 21st century.

6. Leadership development opportunities.

Leadership development opportunities consist of a wide range of activities that promote responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors. The types of leadership development opportunities could include: exposure to postsecondary educational opportunities; community and service learning projects; peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring; organizational and team work training, including team leadership training; training in decision-making, including determining priorities; and citizenship training, including life-skills training such as parenting, work-behavior training, and budgeting of resources.

7. Supportive services.

Supportive services are designed to assist youth to overcome barriers to employment. Supportive services may include: linkages to community services, assistance with transportation, assistance with child care and dependent care, referrals to medical services, assistance with appropriate work attire and other work related tools such as protective eye glasses and construction boots, training materials such as books and equipment, assistance with housing, needs related payments, assistance with educational testing, reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities, and creative incentives for students to achieve their goals.

8. Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months.

Adult mentoring is an inclusive supportive relationship between an adult mentor and a youth that promotes success in all areas of life including: academic achievement, positive social skills, career goals, and personal goals. Mentoring is designed to promote positive outcomes and success for youth. Mentoring can be done in various ways, and whether it is a business mentor or a personal mentor, it enhances the chances of success in various aspects of the youth's life. However, the adult mentor cannot be the participant's case manager of record.

9. Comprehensive guidance and counseling.

Comprehensive guidance and counseling is a course of action to help youth make informed and positive educational, occupational, and life choices and implement them in their everyday lives. Many at-risk youth need such assistance in making informed life choices and well-thought-out decisions. Furthermore, some youth need additional assistance addressing and changing serious problem behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse, anti-social behaviors such as violence and bullying, or involvement with the juvenile justice system. Comprehensive guidance and counseling should be designed to meet the needs of individual youth as well as make appropriate counseling referrals to partner organizations or outside entities when needed.

10. Financial literacy education.

Financial literacy education and training is meant to supplement a youth's career and post-secondary readiness, and is fundamental to a youth's ability to navigate the difficulties inherent to participation in the 21st century economy. Activities which fulfill this educational element could include: creating budgets, initiating savings and checking accounts at banks, and making informed financial decisions; managing spending, credit, and debt including student loans, consumer credit, and credit cards; learning the significance of credit reports and scores, their accurate interpretation, cross-checking, and analysis, as well as understanding their rights with respect to the financial information they provide; comparing and contrasting different financial products and services in order to make better informed decisions; training in ways to combat and prevent identity theft and fraud, and an understanding of privacy rights and protections related to personal and financial data; supporting the development and distribution of multilingual financial literacy and education materials for students who are English language learners; providing age appropriate and timely lessons in financial education that can be practiced in real-world contexts; and any other approaches to bolstering knowledge, skills, and confidence in youth making informed, stable, and healthy financial decisions.

11. Entrepreneurial skills training.

Entrepreneurship training and skills are meant to provide youth with the basic tools they'll need to start their own small business, as well as the confidence in those skills (and their practical application) required to begin thinking of themselves as budding businessmen and women. The skills that this element's training must develop include, but are not limited to: taking initiative; creatively seeking and identifying business opportunities; developing budgets and forecasting resource needs; understanding various options for acquiring capital and necessary decisions to be made regarding each option; and effectively communicating and marketing oneself and one's ideas.

12. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area.

Labor and employment data for local areas will be provided to participating youth so as to inform their understanding of the local job market more broadly, and the knowledge they will need to enter the workforce through specific, individualized avenues. Activities that advance this educational element involve at least one of the following: career awareness to be supplemented by comprehensive local economic data and economic indicators; employment information regarding accessible and in-demand industries and occupations; career counseling for youth targeting specific pathways into the workforce; and available career exploration services in local communities.

13. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

Activities that prepare youth to transition to post-secondary education and training are another essential element to WIOA's comprehensive educational provisions. Many participating youth lack adequate exposure to and understanding of the post-secondary education system, and face additional barriers to success due to the rigors and complexities of the college process on top of those they've

struggled with far longer. Activities could include, but are not limited to: college and university tour information, partnerships, and planning; entrance test preparation, practice, and information; completion of applications and scholarships; and financial aid, scholarship information, and application assistance.

14. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation.

All WIOA youth participants must receive some form of follow-up services upon exit for no less than 12 months. The types and duration of services provided may vary based on the needs of the individual, but may include leadership development and supportive services; regular contact with a youth's employer including assistance in addressing work-related problems; assistance in securing better paying jobs, career pathway development, and further education or training; work related peer support groups; adult mentoring; or services necessary to ensure success in post-secondary training. It is permissible to expend funds for a youth participant during the follow-up phase, but expenditures are at the discretion of the local Workforce Development Board.

At minimum, one year of follow-up must:

- Be based on the needs of the individual. Staff should update the participant's ISS prior to exiting to reflect the follow-up plans and strategy;
- Occur at least once every 90 days between services, after exit for non-JAG participants. Follow-up should occur monthly for JAG participants and be documented in the Electronic National Database Management System (eNDMS). WDBs may have additional follow-up policies;
- Include collection of information on employment status, education progress, need for additional services, and problems and challenges occurring and the assistance needed to address them;
- Include reciprocal communication between staff and the participant that identifies how a participant is progressing;
- Occur in person, or via the phone, texting, email, or other forms of one-on-one communication. Follow-up via social networking status updates, tweets, or other mass communication media is not acceptable; and
- Be recorded as a follow-up service with a detailed case note in the State's case management system.

Effective Date

Immediately

Ending Date

Upon rescission

Contact for Questions

policy@dwd.in.gov

Action

Regional Workforce Development Boards shall ensure that the guidance contained within this policy is followed regarding available programs elements and services for all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth participants.